POSE-DRAWING WITH BRUSH AND INK

BY IRENE WEIR

SERIES 1

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THE accompanying drawings have been made in the hope that they may help both children and adults in the most fascinating and yet difficult art of sketching from life. They have all been drawn from children in the schoolroom and usually with children observing the process with breathless eagerness. Therefore, as they are not finished drawings, perhaps they will be the more helpful as suggestive sketches. Their purpose is to show right methods of observation and good methods of execution.

Nothing so interests children as the human life about them. We are social by nature and constantly observe each other. The power to record these observations depends upon our clearness of vision. Simple masses of dark and light strongly contrasted are most easily seen. Edges and outlines are subordinate. Why, then, should we not draw the masses which we see?

In any drawing action and proportion are the two essentials: how masses are related to each other in regard to position and how they are related to each other in regard to size and form. When these are mastered, one has learned to draw. But first one must learn to see. Children are naturally full of grace. In planning pose a child should never be told how to stand or sit, but be placed so that he is related to the background as a mass of dark or light. Fifteen minutes is a good length of time for a pose; then there should be a rest of three or four minutes, and the former pose can be resumed, provided the position of the feet on floor or table has been previously marked with chalk.

When a class draws from life, a rough sketch should first be made of common white chalk on the gray paper,* showing the general action and proportion and omitting all details. This sketch can be corrected by dusting off the chalk with a handkerchief or rag. The brush should then be used, the masses filled in directly with the ink. The ordinary writing ink is suitable for this purpose. No spot or line should be made without fresh observation of the model. The features should always be left until the last. Class criticisms should follow the lesson, and the drawings approved should be, not the neatest, but those most true in action and proportion.

As one studies the work of the earlier masters of painting, Giotto and his followers, Botticelli, the Bellinis, and later artists as well, it must be noticed that they were all chiefly concerned that their masses of dark and light should be well related to each other. It is the basis of all good drawing and artistic composition.

* Brookline Gray. Storrs & Bement, Boston.

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IRENE WEIR,
Art Director of Brookline Schools.

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